United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea CLCS/88

Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

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Progress of work in the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

Statement by the Chair

Summary

The present statement provides information on the work carried out by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and its subcommissions during the thirty-seventh session. In particular, it contains an overview of the work on the submissions made by the following: Uruguay; the Cook Islands, in respect of the Manihiki Plateau; Argentina; Iceland, in respect of the Ægir Basin area and the western and southern parts of the Reykjanes Ridge; Pakistan; Norway, in respect of Bouvetøya and Dronning Maud Land; South Africa, in respect of the mainland of the territory of the Republic of South Africa; jointly by the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, concerning the Ontong Java Plateau; jointly by France and South Africa, in the area of the Crozet Archipelago and the Prince Edward Islands; and Mauritius, in the region of Rodrigues Island. The statement also contains information about presentations made to the Commission by Pakistan pursuant to paragraph 15.1 bis. of annex III to the rules of procedure of the Commission, and by Tonga concerning its submission in respect of the western part of the Lau-Colville Ridge. The statement also addresses, inter alia, the issues of the conditions of service and attendance of the members of the Commission.

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1. Pursuant to the decision adopted at its thirty-fifth session (see CLCS/85, para. 87), as endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 85 of its resolution 69/245, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf held its thirty-seventh session at United Nations Headquarters from 2 February to 20 March 2015. The plenary parts of the session were held from 9 to 13 February and from 9 to 13 March. The other periods were used for the technical examination of submissions at the geographic information system (GIS) laboratories of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat.

2. The following members of the Commission attended the session: Muhammad Arshad, Lawrence Folajimi Awosika, Galo Carrera, Francis L. Charles, Ivan F. Glumov,[1] Richard Thomas Haworth, Martin Vang Heinesen, Emmanuel Kalngui, Wenzheng Lyu,[2] Mazlan Bin Madon, Estevao Stefane Mahanjane, Jair Alberto Ribas Marques, Simon Njuguna, Isaac Owusu Oduro, Yong-Ahn Park, Carlos Marcelo Paterlini, Rasik Ravindra, Walter R. Roest, Tetsuro Urabe and Szymon Uścinowicz. Prior to the session, George Jaoshvili informed the Chair of the Commission, by a letter dated 16 January 2015, of his resignation as a member of the Commission.

3. The Commission had before it the following documents and communications:

(a) Provisional agenda (CLCS/L.38);

(b) Statement by the Chair on the progress of work in the Commission at its thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth sessions (CLCS/85 and CLCS/86);

(c) Submissions made by coastal States[3] pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;[4]

(d) General Assembly resolution 69/245;

(e) Communications received from Canada (29 December 2014), Côte d'Ivoire (17 and 19 November 2014), Federated States of Micronesia (21 November 2014), France (17 December 2014), Iceland (2 March 2015), Kenya (24 October 2014), Morocco (10 March 2015), Nigeria (12 March 2015), Norway (17 December 2014), Oman (10 November 2014), Pakistan (9 October 2014), Somalia (7 October 2014), Sri Lanka (12 February 2015), the United Republic of Tanzania (17 October 2014), the United States of America (two communications dated 12 November 2014) and Yemen (10 December 2014);

(f) Letter from Mr. George Jaoshvili to the Chair of the Commission (16 January 2015).

Item 1
Opening of the thirty-seventh session

4. The Chair of the Commission, Mr. Awosika, opened the plenary of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission.

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[1] Mr. Glumov attended the session from 9 February to 13 March 2015.

[2] Change of transcription of the last name, formerly transcribed as Lu.

[3] For a full list of the submissions made to the Commission, see www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/commission_submissions.htm.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.

Statement by the Legal Counsel

5. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Miguel de Serpa Soares, made a statement. Noting the importance that States attach to the work of the Commission and the increased attention by the media and the public to its work, he encouraged the Commission and its subcommissions to continue engaging with submitting States in a comprehensive, substantive and transparent manner and providing them with clear scientific and technical guidance. He also encouraged the Commission to complete its examination of as many submissions under active consideration as possible by adopting recommendations before the end of the term of office of its current members, in June 2017, and to consider ways and means to ensure continuity in the work of the Commission after the end of its current term.

Item 2
Adoption of the agenda

6. The Commission considered the provisional agenda (CLCS/L.38) and adopted it, as amended (CLCS/87).[5]

Item 3
Organization of work

7. The Commission approved its programme of work and the schedule for deliberations, as outlined by the Chair.

Item 4
Workload of the Commission

Conditions of service of the members of the Commission

8. The Commission recalled its decision taken at the thirty-fifth session (see CLCS/85, para. 87) that, in 2015, it would hold three sessions of seven weeks each, including plenary meetings, for a total of 21 weeks of meetings of the Commission and its subcommissions, on the understanding that that decision could be revisited during the thirty-seventh session, in the light of the progress made in the work of the subcommissions and other developments related to both the workload of the Commission and the conditions of service of its members.

9. In this regard, the Commission took note of relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 69/245, in particular paragraphs 80 to 85, as well as of the

[5] In response to an invitation by the Chair to present their submissions to the Commission at its thirty-seventh session, Sri Lanka; Denmark, in respect of the southern continental shelf of Greenland; Angola; Canada, in respect of the Atlantic Ocean; the Bahamas; France, in respect of the area of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon; Somalia; and, jointly, Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone, in respect of areas in the Atlantic Ocean adjacent to the coast of West Africa, indicated a preference to make their presentations at a subsequent session. This was done on the understanding that the deferral would not affect the position of the submissions in the queue.

information provided by the Secretariat with regard to medical insurance coverage and working space for the members of the Commission. The Commission emphasized its understanding that the reimbursement of the costs of medical travel insurance for those members who benefit from the trust fund established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/7 for facilitating the participation of members of the Commission from developing countries in the meetings of the Commission was an interim measure and that a more permanent solution would be presented in the future. The Commission reiterated its view (see CLCS/83, para. 10, and CLCS/85, para. 11) that, when matters pertaining to the conditions of service are addressed, no distinction should be made between members of the Commission from developing and developed States, and that the concerns of the Commission went well beyond adequate medical coverage.

10. With regard to the issue of working space, the Commission concluded that its members needed more adequate working space and facilities. The Commission requested the Chair to address a letter to the Director of the Division outlining those needs for the purpose of paragraph 84 of resolution 69/245.

11. Recalling relevant paragraphs of resolution 69/245, as well as the above-mentioned requests concerning the working space of its members, the Commission expressed strong expectations that its requirement related to the conditions of service of its members would be addressed by States parties and ultimately by the General Assembly as soon as possible, and well before the expiration of the term of office of its current members.

12. The Commission also discussed the pace of examinations of submissions. Upon reviewing its working arrangements, the Commission recognized that the increase in the number of weeks of work had not yet translated into a proportional increase in the number of recommendations approved. The Commission noted that the completion of the examination of submissions was directly impacted by the frequency, volume and complexity of the submission of additional data and information to the active subcommissions as well as by the promptness of such submissions on the part of delegations in response to requests for clarifications or questions posed by those subcommissions. However, the Commission also noted that its decision to form nine concurrently active subcommissions decreased the projected waiting period for submissions in the queue.

13. The Commission then decided that, for the remainder of the term of office of its current members, which expires in June 2017, it would maintain the current pattern of meetings, i.e., that the Commission and its subcommissions would continue to meet for a total of 21 weeks per year by holding three sessions of seven weeks each, and that four of those 21 weeks would be devoted to plenary meetings. Following further deliberations, the Commission then decided on its plan of work for the thirty-eighth session (see paras. 72-74 below).

Item 5
Consideration of the submission made by Uruguay[6]

Report of the subcommission

14. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Charles reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, noting that the subcommission had met from 2 to 6 February and from 16 to 20 February 2015.

15. The subcommission held two meetings with the delegation, which informed the subcommission of a new seismic survey which had been conducted by Uruguay and indicated that it would make the new processed seismic data and their interpretation available to the subcommission before 10 July 2015.

16. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meetings with the delegation of Uruguay. The subcommission would consider the new data and information to be provided by the delegation of Uruguay during the thirty-eighth session. The subcommission might then be in a position to make its presentation pursuant to paragraph 10.3 of annex III to the rules of procedure (CLCS/40/Rev.1) during the thirty-ninth session of the Commission.

17. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 20 to 24 July and from 17 to 21 August 2015.

Item 6
Consideration of the submission made by the Cook Islands in respect of the Manihiki Plateau[7]

Report of the subcommission

18. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Carrera, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, noting that the subcommission had met from 2 to 6 February 2015 and, following a decision taken by the Commission during the plenary of the thirty-seventh session to optimize the efficiency of the session and advance the work of the subcommission, also from 16 to 20 March. The subcommission worked on its draft recommendations.

19. The subcommission decided that, during the intersessional period, its members would continue to prepare the draft recommendations and the presentation to the plenary, and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, with a view to finalizing the draft recommendations for submission to the Commission and presentation thereof to its plenary during that session.

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[6] Submission made on 7 April 2009; see www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/ submissions_files/ submission_ury_21_2009.htm.

[7] Submission made on 16 April 2009; see www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/ submission_cok_23_2009.htm.

20. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 20 to 31 July 2015.

Item 7
Consideration of the submission made by Argentina[8]

Report of the subcommission

21. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Carrera, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, noting that the subcommission had met from 17 to 27 February 2015.

22. The subcommission held four meetings with the delegation of Argentina and received presentations by the delegation on new information and data provided in response to the request from the subcommission made at the thirty-fifth session. The subcommission gave a presentation with regard to the area in the northern extent of the Atlantic sector of the Argentine continental margin. It was agreed that the delegation would provide a complete response to that presentation at the beginning of the thirty-eighth session.

23. It was also agreed that the subcommission would subsequently give its presentation pursuant to paragraph 10.3 of annex III to the rules of procedure at the thirty-eighth session. Thereafter, the delegation would have an opportunity to provide its response pursuant to paragraph 10.4 of annex III to the rules of procedure. The subcommission would then proceed to draft recommendations with a view to presenting them to the plenary of the Commission during the thirty-eighth session.

24. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to prepare its presentation pursuant to paragraph 10.3 of annex III to the rules of procedure during the intersessional period, and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meeting with the delegation of Argentina.

25. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 10 to 21 August 2015.

Item 8
Consideration of the submission made by Iceland in respect of the Ægir Basin area and the western and southern parts of Reykjanes Ridge[9]

Consideration of draft recommendations

26. The Commission resumed its consideration of the draft recommendations, which had been introduced to it by the subcommission at the thirty-fourth session (see CLCS/83, paras. 64-66). The Commission decided to continue further consideration of the draft recommendations at the thirty-eighth session.

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[8] Submission made on 21 April 2009; see www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_arg_25_2009.htm.

[9] Submission made on 29 April 2009; see www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_isl_27_2009.htm.

27. The Commission also considered a communication from Iceland dated 2 March 2015. The Commission took note of the communication and the views expressed therein and requested the Chair to respond to Iceland on behalf of the Commission.

Item 9
Consideration of the submission made by Pakistan

Report of the subcommission

28. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Urabe, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session, noting that the subcommission had met from 2 to 6 March 2015. The subcommission prepared its presentation to the Commission on the draft recommendations.

Consideration of draft recommendations

29. On 10 March 2015, the subcommission introduced the draft "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 30 April 2009" to the Commission through a presentation delivered by the Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Urabe, together with Messrs. Heinesen, Mahanjane and Njuguna.

30. On the same day, a meeting was held between the delegation of Pakistan and the Commission, pursuant to paragraph 15.1 bis. of annex III to the rules of procedure. At that meeting, the presentation of Pakistan was made by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Head of Delegation, Maleeha Lodhi; the Judge Advocate General, Zafar Mansoor Tipu; the Principal Research Officer and Project Director, Asif Inam; and the Deputy Hydrographer, Salman Ahmed Khan. The delegation also included a number of advisers. In its presentation, the delegation stated its agreement with the conclusions of the subcommission.

Approval of recommendations

31. The Commission then continued its deliberations in private. On 13 March 2015, following a thorough consideration of the draft recommendations prepared by the subcommission and of the above-mentioned presentation made by the delegation, the Commission approved by consensus "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 30 April 2009", with amendments. Pursuant to article 6, paragraph 3, of annex II to the Convention, the recommendations, including a summary thereof, were submitted in writing to the coastal State and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 19 March 2015.

Item 10
Consideration of the submission made by Norway in respect of Bouvetøya and Dronning Maud Land

Report of the subcommission

32. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Haworth, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, noting that the subcommission had met from 2 to 6 March 2015.

33. The subcommission held three meetings with the delegation of Norway, in the course of which additional information provided by the delegation was reviewed and discussed. The delegation of Norway indicated its intention to provide a revised executive summary.

34. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meeting with the delegation of Norway.

35. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 27 to 31 July and from 31 August to 4 September 2015.

Item 11
Consideration of the submission made by South Africa in respect of the mainland of the territory of the Republic of South Africa

Report of the subcommission

36. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Haworth, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session, noting that the subcommission had met from 23 to 27 February 2015, and, following a decision taken by the Commission during the plenary of the thirty-seventh session to optimize the efficiency of the session and advance the work of the subcommission, also from 16 to 20 March.

37. The subcommission held three meetings with the delegation of South Africa, in the course of which the delegation gave a presentation providing additional data and information on the area of the Mozambique Ridge — Agulhas Plateau, and the subcommission gave a presentation on its views on the western margin. Subsequently, the delegation gave another presentation in response to that presentation by the subcommission. The subcommission also reviewed the additional information received and continued its analysis of the area of the Mozambique Ridge — Agulhas Plateau.

38. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meeting with the delegation of South Africa.

39. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 10 to 14 August 2015.

Item 12
Consideration of the joint submission made by the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in respect of the Ontong Java Plateau

Report of the subcommission

40. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Roest, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and at the thirty-seventh session, noting that

the subcommission had met from 23 to 27 February 2015 and, following a decision taken by the Commission during the plenary of the thirty-seventh session to optimize the efficiency of the session and advance the work of the subcommission, also from 16 to 20 March. No meetings were held with the joint delegation during the thirty-seventh session.

41. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the joint submission. The joint delegation transmitted to the subcommission a document that responded to the request for clarification made by the subcommission at the thirty-sixth session. Based on its deliberations, the subcommission then formulated requests for further clarifications, which were subsequently transmitted in writing to the joint delegation.

42. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work on the joint submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the joint submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meeting with the joint delegation.

43. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 27 to 31 July and from 10 to 14 August 2015.

Item 13
Consideration of the joint submission made by France and South Africa in respect of the area of the Crozet Archipelago and the Prince Edward Islands

Report of the subcommission

44. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Njuguna, reported on the progress of its work during the intersessional period and the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, noting that the subcommission had met from 2 to 6 February and from 17 to 20 February 2015.

45. The subcommission held three meetings with the joint delegation, during which the subcommission gave a presentation on a number of issues in the context of the main scientific and technical examination of the joint submission, and the joint delegation gave a presentation in response. Subsequently, the subcommission gave another presentation reflecting its views on outstanding issues.

46. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meeting with the joint delegation.

47. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 20 to 24 July and from 17 to 21 August 2015.

Item 14
Consideration of the submission made by Mauritius in respect of the region of Rodrigues Island

Report of the subcommission

48. The Chair of the subcommission, Mr. Madon, reported on the progress of its work at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, noting that the subcommission had met from 2 to 6 March 2015. No meetings were held with the delegation during the thirty-seventh session.

49. The subcommission continued its consideration of the submission in greater detail, in anticipation of the additional data and information from Mauritius that will be received during the thirty-eighth session.

50. The subcommission decided that its members would resume their consideration of the submission during the thirty-eighth session, including meetings with the delegation of Mauritius.

51. The Commission subsequently decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the thirty-eighth session would be held from 31 August to 4 September 2015.

Item 15
Presentation of the submission made by:

Tonga in respect of the western part of the Lau-Colville Ridge

52. The presentation of the partial submission of Tonga was made on 13 February 2015 by the head of the delegation, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala; the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources and Minister of Defence, Lord Ma'afu Tuku'i'aulahi; the Permanent Representative of Tonga to the United Nations, Mahe'uli'uli Sandhurst Tupouniua; the Acting Attorney General, 'Asipeli'Aminiasi Kefu; the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Viliami Va'inga Tone; and the Deputy Secretary, Ministry for Lands and Natural Resources, Taaniela Kula. The delegation also included the Deputy Permanent Representative, Tevita Suka Mangisi.

53. In addition to elaborating on substantive points of the submission, Lord Ma'afu noted that the first partial submission by Tonga had been made on 11 May 2009 with respect to the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the eastern part of the Tonga-Kermadec Ridge. Mr. Tone indicated that the area of the continental shelf included in the submission was not the subject of any dispute and that no notes verbales had been received from other States. Furthermore, the submission was made without prejudice to the delimitation with Fiji and New Zealand, which may be conducted at a later date. Mr. Tone noted that one member of the Commission, Mr. Carrera, had provided Tonga with advice and assistance concerning the submission. In addition, assistance had been provided, in parts, by the Special Advisory Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and scientific and technical training had been received from the Division. Lord Ma'afu proposed that the partial submission could be considered in an expedited manner by the whole Commission, since it covered a region where the Commission had already

considered a previous submission and adopted recommendations, based on the same data and information, and where the same outer limits were proposed.

54. The Commission subsequently continued its meeting in private. Addressing the modalities for the consideration of the submission, the Commission, taking note of the request of Tonga for an expedited consideration of the submission, decided that, in keeping with its practice, and as provided in article 5 of annex II to the Convention and in rule 42 of its rules of procedure, the submission would be considered at a future session by a subcommission established in accordance with rule 51, paragraph 4 ter, of the rules of procedure. The Commission decided that it would establish a subcommission when the submission was next in line for consideration, as queued in the order in which it was received.

Item 16
Report of the Chair of the Committee on Confidentiality

55. The Chair of the Committee on Confidentiality, Mr. Park, reported that since the thirty-fifth session, no issues that fell within the purview of the Committee had arisen and that, consequently, no meeting of the Committee had been required during the thirty-seventh session.

56. The Commission took note of the report.

Item 17
Report of the Chair of the Editorial Committee

57. The Chair of the Editorial Committee, Mr. Haworth, reported that no meeting of the Committee had been required during the thirty-seventh session. He also informed the Commission that the Committee has been receiving additional comments with respect to the template for recommendations of the Commission in respect of a submission.[10] The Chair encouraged members of the Commission to continue reviewing the template in the light of further recommendations that were being prepared, and to forward any additional comments or suggestions for improvements to the Editorial Committee.

58. The Commission took note of the report.

Item 18
Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee

59. The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee, Mr. Urabe, reported that the Committee had held one meeting, and informed that no request for scientific and technical advice from a coastal State had been received. He also recalled the proposal concerning issues of a scientific and technical nature that had been brought to the attention of the Commission at the thirty-fifth session.[11]

[10] See CLCS/62, para. 82; CLCS/78, paras. 41 and 42; CLCS/80, para. 72; and CLCS/83, para. 88.
[11] See CLCS/85, paras. 79 and 95.

60. The Commission took note of the report and invited members to bring any such issue to the attention of the plenary, as appropriate.

Item 19
Report of the Chair of the Training Committee and other training issues

61. The Chair of the Training Committee, Mr. Carrera, reported that no meeting of the Committee had been required during the period under review. He informed that when approached by States interested in organizing future trainings he had advised them to address their requests to the Division.

62. The Commission took note of the report and of the information provided by the Division with regard to possible future training activities.

Item 20
Other matters

Matters pertaining to the participation by members in conferences and symposiums

63. The Commission established an open-ended working group with Messrs. Carrera, Glumov, Marques, Oduro, Park and Roest as core members and Mr. Carrera as its Chair, to consider the issue of the participation by members in conferences and symposiums.

64. On 9 March 2015, the Chair of the open-ended working group reported on the outcome of its work. The Commission then approved, with modifications, the document drafted by the working group, namely guidelines pertaining to the participation of members of the Commission in conferences and symposiums, as an internal document of the Commission.

Referral by a subcommission to the plenary of the Commission of issues of a general nature encountered during the examination of a submission

65. The members of the Commission exchanged views on the circumstances in which a subcommission could refer to the plenary of the Commission issues of a general nature encountered during the examination of a submission.

66. The Commission established a small working group consisting of two members, which was requested to further consider this issue and to report back to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session.

Issues of a scientific and technical nature

67. The Commission considered again the possibility of devoting time to internal discussions of topics of a scientific and technical nature during a future session. In view of the heavy workload of the thirty-seventh session related to the consideration of submissions, it was decided that such internal discussions might be held at future sessions, when the workload so permits.

Procedures and practices of subcommissions

68. The Commission established an open-ended working group, with Messrs. Awosika, Carrera, Kalngui, Madon, Oduro, Park and Roest as core members, with a view to preparing a standard draft presentation describing procedures and practices followed by its subcommissions in the examination of submissions. The draft presentation would be considered by the plenary at the thirty-eighth session.

Geographic information management software used for submissions

69. The attention of the Commission was drawn to the fact that, for a number of submissions in the queue, the geographic information management software packages used by submitting States in the course of their preparation might no longer be compatible with the versions that might be used by the Commission by the time these submissions were next in line for consideration. In this regard, the Commission decided to encourage submitting States to ensure that the parts of their submissions for which a geographic information management software was utilized remained compatible with the software version used by the Commission.[12]

Communication dated 12 February 2015 from Sri Lanka

70. On 12 February 2015, Sri Lanka addressed a communication to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which was brought to the attention of the Commission. The Commission took note of the communication and the views expressed therein.

Communications from States

71. The Commission noted the general interest of States Members of the United Nations, as well as States parties to the Convention, in transparency in the work of the Commission. Except in relation to communications from submitting States transmitting confidential data and information, the Commission reiterated its encouragement to States not to restrict the circulation of their communications only to the members of the Commission, to the extent possible,[13] particularly where such communications refer to the submission of another State.

Next session of the Commission

72. The Commission recalled its decision to hold its thirty-eighth session from 20 July to 4 September 2015 (see CLCS/85, para. 87 (b)), as endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 85 of its resolution 69/245. Discussing the plan of work for that session, it endeavoured to organize the meetings of the active subcommissions in a way that would maximize the progress in the consideration of the submission, and, to the extent possible, would distribute the workload equitably among members of the Commission.

73. The Commission decided that the subcommission established to examine the submission made by Uruguay would meet from 20 to 24 July and from 17 to 21 August; the subcommission established to examine the submission made by the Cook Islands concerning the Manihiki Plateau would meet from 20 to 31 July; the

[12] Information on the versions of the GIS software packages currently used by the Commission is available on the website of the Division; see www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/clcs_home.htm.

[13] See CLCS/83, para. 98.

subcommission established to examine the submission made by Argentina would meet from 10 to 21 August; the subcommission established to examine the submission made by Norway in respect of Bouvetøya and Dronning Maud Land would meet from 27 to 31 July and from 31 August to 4 September; the subcommission established to examine the submission made by South Africa in respect of the mainland of the territory of the Republic of South Africa would meet from 10 to 14 August; the subcommission established to examine the joint submission made by the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in respect of the Ontong Java Plateau would meet from 27 to 31 July and from 10 to 14 August; the subcommission established to examine the joint submission made by France and South Africa in respect of the area of the Crozet Archipelago and the Prince Edward Islands would meet from 20 to 24 July and from 17 to 21 August; and the subcommission established to examine the submission made by Mauritius in respect of the region of Rodrigues Island would meet from 31 August to 4 September. It was decided that another subcommission which would meet from 31 August to 4 September would not be formed until the plenary of the thirty-eighth session.

74. The plenary parts of the thirty-eighth session will be held from 3 to 7 August and from 24 to 28 August 2015.

Attendance of members

75. The Commission addressed the issue of attendance of its members and re-emphasized that it was important for all members of the Commission to attend all its meetings on time and in full. The Chair informed the Commission that he would bring to the attention of Permanent Missions the absence of members of the Commission nominated by their Governments and the repercussions of their absence on the work of the Commission, as needed.

76. The Commission took note of the letter of resignation addressed to the Chair by George Jaoshvili, member of the Commission nominated by Georgia, received on 16 January 2015. In this regard, the Chair recalled that this resignation created a vacancy in the Commission among the members of the Commission elected from the Eastern European Group of States, which is expected to be filled through a by-election at the upcoming twenty-fifth Meeting of States Parties to be held in New York from 8 to 12 June 2015.

Trust funds

77. The Secretariat informed the Commission about the status of the trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in its meetings. For the thirty-sixth session, assistance had been provided to eight members of the Commission, in the amount of approximately $137,000. For its thirty-seventh session, an estimated total of $155,000 in financial assistance was being provided to eight members. The Secretariat also informed the Commission that since the issuance of the last statement of the Chair a contribution of $18,185.15 had been received from a State. As at 10 March 2015, the trust fund had an approximate balance of $681,000. The Commission acknowledged with appreciation the contributions made to the trust fund but expressed concern regarding the financial state of the trust fund and the dwindling level of contributions. In this connection, the Commission put emphasis on the importance

of the trust fund in the light of the working arrangements adopted by the Commission after consideration of the request of the Meeting of States Parties (see SPLOS/229). Without a sustained flow of contributions, the trust fund will not be able to assist eligible members in the context of 21 weeks of meetings per year on the part of the Commission and its subcommissions. In this connection, it should be recalled that following the inclusion of medical insurance under the terms of reference of the trust fund, its resources might be depleted at a faster rate.

78. The Secretariat provided an overview of the status of the trust fund for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of submissions to the Commission by developing States, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, and compliance with article 76 of the Convention. The Secretariat also informed the Commission that, since the issuance of the last statement of the Chair, no contributions had been received. Two awards were granted, one for approximately $44,000 and the other for approximately $107,000. These are expected to be disbursed in the coming weeks. As at 10 March 2015, the trust fund had an approximate balance of $1,314,000.

Acknowledgements

79. The Commission noted with appreciation and gratitude the high standard of Secretariat services rendered to it by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

80. The Commission expressed its appreciation to other members of the Secretariat for the assistance they provided to the Commission and, in particular, noted the high professional standard of interpretation in the official languages of the United Nations and the assistance provided by the conference officers.